DEMOCRATIC
GERMAN REPORT

VOL V NO. 17 August 17th 1956 Price: 15 Pf. 5c., 3d

PATTERN FOR WEST

Democratic Germany Shows Socialism Works

The German Democratic Republic, as the most westerly of the socialist states, must provide a living example for western Europe of how socialism works in a highly industrialised western country.

This was the main theme of an important meeting of the Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party in East Berlin from July 27th to 29th.

The Central Committee unanimously adopted a report from first Secretary Walter Ulbricht outlining the main tasks to be undertaken in the next five years to show conclusively that the socialist system is superior to capitalism. "During the next five years the German Democratic Republic will prove that we can not only provide the right to work, the right to education, and the right to recreation, but also that we can raise the standard of living of the population".

By 1960, Walter Ulbricht stated, Democratic Germany must overtake West Germany in living standards, science and technology.

The report to the Central Committee frankly admitted a number of shortcomings in Democratic Germany which had often been glossed over in the past. Industrial techniques were lagging badly behind world standards in many fields; West Germans are better off with regard to consumer goods than East German workers; people have been moving from East Germany to West Germany not only because of economic difficulties in the East, but also because they had sometimes been harried by government officials. Special measures were now being taken to overcome all these shortcomings.

Immediate measures for improving life in Democratic Germany, proposed by the Central Committee, included the following:

1. Abolition of the remainder of food rationing in 1957.

2. Big increases in old age pensions under which workers will receive a minimum of 50 % of their wages as pensions.

3. The working week to be reduced to 45 hours in 1957, and to 42 hours by 1960, without loss of earnings.

(Full report inside)

THIRD BIG FREIGHTER LAUNCHED

The third 10,000 ton freighter built in the shipyards of the German Democratic Republic was christened with the name "Freuhdschaft" — Friendship — at the launching ceremony in Warnemuende on the Baltic on July 30th.

In the next four years it is planned to build twelve more freighters of this size in the German Democratic Republic. Before the war East German shipyards built nothing bigger than small fishing boats.

SUPPORT FOR SUEZ TAKE-OVER

The Government of the German Democratic Republic fully approves President Nasser's step in nationalising the Suez Canal, it was officially stated in Berlin on August 9th.

Since East Germany's trade with the states of the far east is steadily increasing, the German Democratic Republic is interested in the preservation of the rights of free passage through the canal; the Government relies to the full on the declaration of the Egyptian Government that the rights of passage will be guaranteed.

The Government of Democratic Germany sees no necessity for the holding of an international conference on this subject, the official statement added. If, however, such a conference is held, then the Government insists that it should be invited. "Until Germany has been reunited it is absolutely necessary that both German states should be represented at such conferences" the statement said.

EAST GERMANY, YUGOSLAVIA COOPERATE

The German Democratic Republic will cooperate with the Soviet Union in building a huge aluminium plant in Yugoslavia. The plant, with an annual production of 50,000 tons of aluminium, will be completed and in production by 1961.

Details of this cooperative effort were announced in Moscow on August 3rd. The Soviet Union and Democratic Germany will supply the machinery and engineers who will help to build the plant. In addition they will give Yugoslavia a long-term credit of 700 million roubles, which will be paid back in the aluminium to be produced by the plant.

The agreement between the three countries forsees that further help will be given to Yugoslavia after 1961 in order to expand the plant to an annual capacity of 100,000 tons.

East Germany: Model for West Europe

Report to the Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party by First Secretary Walter Ulbricht

The German Democratic Republic, the most westerly of all the Socialist states, has a special task of showing how socialism can be successful under West European conditions, Walter Ulbricht stated.

"Our Five Year Plan is being put into effect under the prevailing conditions, whereby we have an open flank exposed to West Germany. Our plan is, in fact, being carried out in western Europe, and gives the West German and western European workers a chance of seeing with their own eyes the success of socialism.

"The German Democratic Republic must overtake West Germany by reaching world standards in science and technology, and by providing a higher standard of living for the workers.

"Under present world conditions it is the task of the workers of the German Democratic Republic to prove that the socialist system, which permits no exploitation of man by man, is superior to the monopoly capitalism of West Germany. During the period of the Second Five Year Plan (1956—60) the German Democratic Republic will prove that we can not only provide the right to work, the right to education and the right to recreation, but that we can also raise the standard of living of the population."

Soviet Union Primes the Pump

A huge development in the economy of Democratic Germany would be possible because of additional aid from the Soviet Union given under the agreement signed in Moscow on July 17th. Ulbricht announced for the first time that this additional aid for priming the pump of the East German economy would amount to 7,500 million rubles (1,875 million dollars) in the next four years.

The aid, which is supplementary to ordinary trade and long term credits granted in the past, would be given in the following ways:

1. Orders from the Soviet Union and the People's Democracies would ensure capacity use of the factories of Democratic Germany. To meet the demand, machine production would have to be brought up to world standards very quickly, and some nationally owned and private factories would have to convert to new lines of production. Regular supplies of raw materials would be ensured by agreements with the Soviet Union and the People's Democracies, and every effort would be made to expand raw material production in Democratic Germany.

2. Scientific cooperation with the Soviet Union would be further developed. An example of this was the 100 megawatt atomic power plant to be built with Soviet help in the German Democratic Republic.

3. Costs for the stationing of Soviet troops in Democratic Germany would be halved from 1600 million marks to 800 million marks annually.

4. The Soviet Union would pay more for uranium and other ores mined in Democratic Germany by the joint Soviet-German Wismut undertaking.

5. The Soviet Union was extending Democratic Germany a ten-year goods credit at the low interest rate of two percent.

Plan Lag Criticised

He sharply criticised the fact that industrial production had been lagging behind the targets set in the first six months of 1956. The plan had been fulfilled in hard coal, iron and copper ore, steel, cement and a number of other basic industries, but other important branches such as electric power, brown coal, tractors, cars and artificial manure had not reached the targets. Overall industrial production had only reached 96.7 percent of the target figures.

(Although industrial production had fallen short of the target figure, there was a big all-round increase in production compared to 1955. Complete production figures for the first half of 1956, published after Walter Ulbricht had addressed the Central Committee, showed that production this year was 7.5% higher than in the same period of 1955.)

The reasons for the lag included delayed planning, insufficient foresight in coping with winter weather difficulties and slow introduction of new industrial techniques. In addition there had been some difficulties because a number of People's Democracies had not completed their planning in time, thus leading to import and export difficulties.

Ulbricht dealt at length with the necessity for reaching international standards in all fields of production. Until now, main attention had been concentrated on rebuilding industry destroyed in the war, and getting big scale production going on a socialist basis, but now it was necessary to reach world standards.

He stated very frankly that in many fields industrial development in the German Democratic Republic was lagging badly. In machine tools, for instance, three-quarters of production was not up to world standards in capacity and simplicity of use; 30% of the power plants produced were below standard; in radio and telecommunications 70% of production was old-fashioned; there were bad examples of lagging behind in the standards of production in textile machinery, printing machinery, locomotives and agricultural machinery.

In order to catch up in all these fields it was necessary to devote much more attention to research and development, and to devote a higher proportion of machine production to the re-equipment of the factories in Democratic Germany.

Rationing to End

It is planned to abolish the last remnants of rationing in Democratic Germany during 1957, Ulbricht stated.

"The Politbureau believes that it should be possible to abolish the rationing of foodstuffs during 1957" he said. "The basis for this measure will be provided by various

economic measures to increase agricultural production, and by imports from the Soviet Union and some People's Democracies which will make it possible to accumulate the necessary reserves. There are, however, several problems connected with this step.

"When we compare the present situation in the German Democratic Republic with the situation in West Germany, we get the following picture:

There is no great difference in the basic wages paid in the two parts of Germany: working hours are however longer in West Germany, and women's wages are considerably lower. Pro capita consumption of various consumer goods is higher in West Germany than it is here, and in many cases West German quality is better. Our prices for rationed goods are 20—40% below West German prices, but our prices for food on the free market, and for consumer goods in general, are higher than in West Germany. On the other hand our rents, rationed fuel and electricity and gas charges are much lower than in the west. The West German population is at an advantage in the supply of consumer goods, but our social services such as the health service, schools and cultural services are better than those provided in West Germany.

"When rationing is abolished we shall have to raise the prices of goods hitherto rationed to approximately the West German level; this will make it necessary to adjust the earnings of various sections of the population."

(At present meat, fats and sugar are available at cheap subsidised prices on ration cards in the German Democratic Republic. Ration cards are differentiated, so that heavy workers receive more than sedentary workers and pensioners. The monthly maximum and minimum allotments on the ration card are as follows: Meat — between 3 lbs and 5.6 lbs. Fats — between 2 lbs and 4 lbs. Sugar — between 2.6 lbs and 4 lbs. All these goods are also available at higher prices on the free market.)

Higher Pensions

A special commission would be appointed to overhaul the pension system, which was still largely based on out-of-date capitalist principles, Ulbricht announced. It was hoped it would be possible to put the new old age pension scheme into effect during 1957.

Details of the new scheme still remained to be worked out, but it would be based on the following principles:

1. Pensions would be based on average earnings in the last five years of employment. Persons earning less than 400 marks monthly should receive about 70 % of their earnings as pension; persons earning more than 400 marks monthly should receive a smaller proportion but never less than 50 % of previous earnings.
2. Men should receive pensions at 65, women at 60.
3. Persons employed in one nationally-owned factory for more than 15 years should receive a special supplement of 10 %.

Shorter Working Week

It was planned to reduce the present working week of 48 hours, and a special commission of the Central Committee would hammer out the details. The basic principles to be followed would be:

1. The industrial working week should be reduced to 45 hours in 1947.
2. By 1960 the working week in industry should be reduced to 42 hours generally, and to 40 hours in certain branches of industry.

The shortening of the working week would begin in mining, to be followed by foundries, engineering factories and chemical plant. The reduction in working hours would not entail any reduction in earnings.

100,000 Houses More than Planned

The present situation in the building of new housing is unsatisfactory, Ulbricht stated. In the period of the first Five Year Plan (1951—55) a total of 206,000 new dwellings were constructed at a cost of 4,100 million marks, but the price of building has been steadily rising.

The Second Five Year plan foresees the building of even more houses, but greater efforts must be made to rationalise the housing programme. The Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party will appoint a special commission to consider the steps that can be taken to reduce the cost of the housing programme, and to drive ahead with the industrialisation of the building trade, so that it will be possible to build 100,000 more houses than originally planned during the period of the Second Five Year Plan. Special attention will be paid to the use of pre-fabricated sections to speed up construction and make it more economical.

Agriculture will have to be further mechanised in the German Democratic Republic, Ulbricht reported. By 1960, 81 % of all field work should be mechanised, but this entails a great increase in the number of tractors and machines available to the machine and tractor stations.

In order to make the machines of the machine and tractor stations fully available to all farms, hire tariffs will be standardised.

(At present agricultural production cooperatives can hire tractors and other machines at only a fraction of the price charged to individual peasants.)

Agricultural production must be specialised more than it is at present. Up until now, for instance, hilly areas in the south of Democratic Germany have been obliged to plant large quantities of cereals and root crops, although conditions were not favourable. It would be much more economical to concentrate on cattle in such areas, and steps must be taken to encourage such a development.

The entire system of fixed delivery quotas for crops at fixed prices will have to be revised.

Why People Move to West Germany

One of the reasons why people fled from Democratic Germany to West Germany was their discontent because of temporary economic difficulties here, Ulbricht declared frankly.

This was not the only reason, however, he said. "Another reason has been the breaches of the principles of socialist legality by various government officials. Insufficient attention to democratic legality made it easier for our enemies to slander the German Democratic Republic.

"We must also state quite frankly that not enough was done to explain clearly to our citizens our economic difficulties, which were the inevitable result of the partitioning of Germany. This led some people to believe that these difficulties could never be overcome. There were many cases of bureaucratic and soulless treatment by government officials and officials of social bodies, particularly in such matters as the issue of permits and licences; such treatment injured the personal interests of our citizens.

"We believe that all such questions must be dealt with in the various elected bodies (town councils, county

councils, parliament, ed) so that in future such errors can be avoided and people will not flee from the Republic, but that on the contrary young people, intellectuals and qualified workers will come here to participate in our great work of construction."

Broadening the Basis of Democracy

The rights and the duties of the various elected bodies in Democratic Germany must be greatly extended. Government officials must be responsible to the elected bodies, and elected representatives must report back to their electors.

Various measures would have to be taken in the near future to extend the field of responsibility of the local authorities, and to combat a tendency to over-centralisation and 'order-giving' in the various ministries and central bodies.

More attention must be devoted to the work of the National Front and the democratic parties allied in this organisation. The National Front could only fulfil its purpose, Walter Ulbricht stated, if the representatives of all parties cooperated in its work on a basis of equality and free exchange of opinions.

(The National Front is in effect a coalition of all five parties in Democratic Germany: the Socialist Unity Party; the Christian Democratic Party; the Liberal Democratic Party; the National Democratic Party; and the Democratic Peasant Party. In the past there have been criticisms that the Socialist Unity Party has played a too dominant role in various organisations of the National Front, and that not enough attention has been paid to the opinions and ideas of the other parties.)

The press and the radio have a big role to play in the broadening of democracy in Democratic Germany, Ulbricht said.

Relations with Yugoslavia

The Socialist Unity Party regretted the split with the Communists of Yugoslavia in 1948, Ulbricht stated. "Our party welcomes the normalisation of relations between the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, and the establishment of friendly relations between the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Yugoslav League of Communists. The Politbureau proposes that the Central Committee should declare that conditions have now been established which enable the restoration of normal friendly relations between our parties."

Rehabilitations in the Socialist Unity Party

He announced that a special commission of the Central Committee had considered the cases of a number of leading members of the Socialist Unity Party who had been disciplined in the past. The following decisions had now been taken:

1. Franz Dahlem, who was removed from the Politbureau and severely censured in 1953 for "political blindness", had been rehabilitated.

2. Party censures on Anton Ackermann, Hans Jendretzky and Elli Schmidt, removed from leading Party posts in 1953, had been stricken from the record.

3. Persons demoted or punished in connection with the "Noel Field Affair" had been rehabilitated.

The Socialist Future for All Germany

The Social Democratic Party in West Germany had publicly recognised that the socialist achievements in Democratic Germany, such as nationalised industry and land reform, would have to be retained after German reunification.

"But this is not enough today", Ulbricht said. "There can be absolutely no doubt that the socialist achievements of the workers of the German Democratic Republic will be retained after reunification. But what the workers in the whole of Germany want to know is what is going to happen in West Germany; they want to know whether, after the militarists have been leashed in West Germany, steps will then be taken to split up the big estates, nationalise the big monopolies, and remove the monopoly in educational opportunity."

WEST GERMAN CHILDREN IN EASTERN HOLIDAY CAMPS

Hamburg Journalist Sees for Himself

About 30,000 West German children were invited by the East German government to spend three week's camping holiday in East Germany again this summer. They had only to pay their fares to the East German frontier; everything else was free.

Here are some impressions by Heinz Schewe, of "Die Welt", one of the most influential newspapers in West Germany, of a visit to one of the main camps, in Stolberg in the Harz mountains:

In the midst of the rainwashed mountain landscape looms a bright blue triumphal arch — "Central Soya Kosmodemyanskaya Free German Youth Camp" painted large upon it. A Moscow partisan girl executed during the war is the patron of this camp.

Thirteen huge wooden pillars covered with blue cloth have the thirteen rules of the Young Pioneer organisation painted on them as a constant reminder to campers.

Along with the 730 campers from Leipzig, Gera, Halle or Eisenach, the 70 boys and girls from West Berlin also wear the blue Young Pioneer kerchief when they meet for roll-call at ten minutes to ten each morning. Flags are hoisted, the Young Pioneers' pledge recited and their song sung; then the day's activity can begin.

Children fall into groups for games, handwork, first-aid, history, nature study and zoology, swimming, hiking and so on. When it rains they meet for singing or story-telling in the dining-hall or to watch a film. A 20-man theatre ensemble comes regularly from the Eisenach theatre to play for the children.

Each "Friendship" group is made up of 200 boys and girls, and they live in 12 tents or bungalows. The camp director, a young man in his middle twenties, wears breeches, high boots and a high-necked sweater. His three assistants have special tasks — one is in charge of "political-educational work", another is house-keeper and the third looks after hygiene. The camp doctor is called a "district hygienist".

The food served on this Sunday was good and plentiful: roast beef, cabbage and potatoes and blancmange with fruit syrup. Each child gets half a liter of milk a day, and for supper there is bread and butter with sausage and cheese, and tea to drink.

The radio blares without intermission — folk songs, marches, dance music, news and camp announcements. There are 600 books in the library — Ignatov's "Partisans" rubbing shoulders with "Legends of Troy", a Fenimore Cooper next to a Russian story for girls.

"I make this contribution every summer", said the girl student librarian from Halle who was in charge here. That is how they talk — about "holiday planning", "educational work", "camp work", "cultural ensemble", "first transit" (meaning the first group of campers ed.) and so on.

This is the atmosphere in which 30,000 West German and West Berlin children are this year spending three weeks' holiday. I met a thirteen-year-old from Harburg who had camped in East Germany five summers in succession. His parents — his father is a welder on the railways — are spending their holiday with his two sisters on the Rhine. Both this youngster and his brother cheerfully gave up such a bourgeois holiday in favour of the romantic, free-and-easy camp life here.

Children of this age are not interested in politics; and politics are not forced down their throats either. But they certainly take many impressions home with them — slogans, pictures, busts, roll-call pledges, songs. And friendships which linger. "Forty per cent of all the West German children who come to us correspond regularly with their little friends in the German Democratic Republic", an official of the East German holiday planning organisation told me.

The East German government allocated 51.8 million marks to "holiday planning" this year, and fifty central Young Pioneer camps are supported from this sum, with additional help from the director funds of the big factories and voluntary contributions from workers. There are also hundreds of factory holiday homes entirely supported by the nationally owned factories.

"Our children do not have to depend on begging campaigns" the Gera holiday planning campaign committee chairman told us. I compare this with Hamburg. The Hamburg senate allocated 200,000 marks for children's holidays this year; the additional 250,000 marks needed came from a Christmas lottery or had to be solicited. And this sum was only sufficient to send children on holiday whose parents earned no more than twice the standard minimum living wage, or children from broken-up families. Most of these are in homes; and a home is not the same as a tent camp.

Abridged from "Die Welt", Hamburg 21st July 1956

HARRY GILROY OF THE NEW YORK TIMES SEES EAST GERMAN HOLIDAY HOME

Bad Schandau, East Germany, July 28th.

Here in what are locally called the Saxon Alps, but which look like the lower Poconos, an East German trade unionist can have a vacation for almost nothing. One factor making it possible is that he has partly paid in advance.

The Free German Trade Unions, a federation of labour groups in Soviet-controlled East Germany, own several boarding houses and a hotel in this town. There is bathing in the swift-flowing Elbe River, a few miles from the point where the stream enters East Germany from Czechoslovakia.

In addition, there is good hiking over the adjacent Alps. The most famous of these rocky hummocks is at Koenigstein, where a twelfth-century Bohemian fortress sits 750 feet above the river. Steamer trips on the river are another attraction.

One of the union vacation homes is called Bykow House. Bykow, according to an East German official, was a Russian worker who developed a method of speeding up his work.

The manager of the home is Hans Sonntag, a spry little 63-year-old man who wears a lace handkerchief in his breast pocket. He explained that every year the Berlin bureau of the union federation allotted periods at each of its vacation places to various factories. Contracts are then made between the federation and the plant locals.

This year Bykow House is entertaining mostly metal workers. It provides sleeping quarters for fifty-five persons and places 138 others in homes around the town. All have their meals at Bykow House.

The hotel report at the end of this week showed the following guests: seventy-nine arbeiter (industrial workers); sixty-four angestellte (clerks and such); five intelligenz (probably engineers), and twenty-three children and twenty-six non-members (mostly unemployed but doubtlessly hardworking wives).

Herr Sonntag explained that all these persons were in the house for a thirteen days' stay. After they leave another group will move in for thirteen days. For this, union members pay 30 marks and non-members 75 marks. (The East German Government rate for the mark is 2.2 to the dollar, but the Government also trades its East mark for the West German mark, valued at about 24 cents, or a one-to-one basis. The unofficial or black market rate for the East Mark was recently reported at about 6 cents).

Before beginning his vacation, the unionist receives 45 marks from his local. This is not exactly a gift, as he has been paying for this purpose to the union all year. According to Herr Sonntag a worker who is paid 300 marks a month gives the union four marks, or forty-eight a year.

One man who stood by while Herr Sonntag delivered his explanation was asked about his vacation. He said he was a glass-blower and that he and a colleague were having a fine time.

How did he like this vacation system? "Very good", he said, "And especially so cheap. Before 1945 we could never make such a trip."

The glass-blower said he earned 500 to 600 marks a month, working a forty-eight hour week. He receives paid vacation of eighteen working days — three weeks.

For comparative purposes, it was brought out that Herr Sonntag received 350 marks a month for managing the vacation house. A maid, making beds and cleaning rooms, receives 203 marks, supplemented by tips that probably are not large.

The rooms in the hotel are simply furnished but orderly. They have washstands, but there is no bath in the house. The manager said baths were being built in a house next door and would be available next year.

From "New York Times", August 6th 1956

NEW SPIRIT IN DEMOCRATIC GERMANY

By Ron Montague, Upminster, England

As one who is not a member of any political party but who seeks to follow the Prince of Peace, I was very pleased to receive an invitation earlier this year to spend a fortnight's holiday in the German Democratic Republic (East Germany).

I had spent two weeks in Cologne in 1937 but had been dismayed at that time by the military developments under Hitler. This time I have felt an entirely different spirit in Germany. Everywhere there is an intense hatred of war and a burning desire to see the division of their country ended. The West German decision to introduce conscription, however, is seen as the latest and heaviest blow yet delivered against the hopes for re-unification. In this connection I was happy to hear that numerous approaches have been, and still are being made by East Germany towards securing the formation of an all-German Government. This is something which must be persisted in for the sake of understanding and peace in the world.

To return to the holiday-making aspect, though, I found some most delightful scenery along the lakesides running south from Berlin and I much enjoyed a trip on one of the many steamers packed with holiday-makers plying between Konigswusterhausen and Bad Saarow. I was greatly impressed by the historic castle of Pillnitz near Dresden and noted that considerable efforts were being made here, as elsewhere, to restore the full ancient grandeur of the place, not as formerly for the benefit of the few but this time for the benefit of the many. On other occasions I saw vast construction schemes, as at Stalinstadt where a whole new town with wide streets and attractive shops has arisen and is now humming with life on a site where only a few years ago there was nothing but barren soil. This is the future in the making.

My knowledge of German, though limited, enabled me to go where I wished without having an official interpreter always at my elbow. In this way I spoke freely to artists, railway - workers, bus - conducturs, students, etc. I found widespread statisfaction with government foreign policy, the health service and with workers' holiday schemes as also with the elimination of such things as crime reporting and sensationalism in both press and cinema.

The introduction of equal pay for women is also popular **(even amongst the men, I was surprised to find).** There was plenty of light music, even swing, as well as other popular forms of entertainment; dancing, fun-fairs, circuses, etc. Many newspapers and magazines too are brighter than I had expected to find. Private shops and small business still flourish in many places and during my stay there was rather greater interest than usual in the shopwindows as a result of recent price cuts.

Certain things, however, troubled me. The over-earnestness and enthusiasm of many of the political leaders seemed to be stifling criticism to a certain extent. There was a hesitancy by some in the street to answer questions freely and although the machinery for democracy existed it frequently happened that new ideas did not, or could not, find their way forward through the machinery. I am aware that improvements are being made as regard many of these things and I would stress that, in general, the picture I have of the German Democratic Republic is of a country finding its way forward in peace and friendship.

West German Factories Black-List Progressives

Former nazi intelligence officers are now drawing up black-lists of "suspicious persons" employed in West German industry, the West German newsmagazine "Spiegel" reported on July 25th.

The nazi intelligence officers work in the "Information Bureau for Factory Security", a department of the "Bundesverband der Deutschen Industrie", the federation of West German industrialists. The department has been organised by Fritz Berendsen, Christian Democratic member of the West German Parliament, and a former colonel of Hitler's general staff.

"Factories which want to receive arms orders from NATO or from the West German Federal Defence Ministry will have to prove that they do not employ eastern spies or other doubtful elements" the "Spiegel" stated. "The Information Bureau for Factory Security will be able to give a guarantee of this after carefully studying the black list and thoroughly screening the factory."

The newsmagazine named as "doubtful elements" members of the Communist Party, "worker correspondents" of progressive papers, and persons who have contacts with East Germany.

Films by Thomas Mann, Arthur Miller

All arrangements have been concluded for the filming of Thomas Mann's famous novel "The Buddenbrooks" in co-production between East and West German film companies, it was announced in Berlin. The film will be made jointly by DEFA, East German nationally owned film company, and a West German firm. The director will be Dr Harald Braun from West Germany.

French camera teams and actors are at present at work in the German Democratic Republic making exterior shots for a film of the play "The Crucible" by leading American playwright Arthur Miller, who recently married Miss Marilyn Monroe. DEFA, the East German film company, constructed a complete New England village in Mecklenburg for location work.

GYM TUNICS OUT

Special gym tunics and blazers will not be introduced for girls and boys at school in Democratic Germany, the Ministry of Education announced on August 1st. The proposal had been made by various authorities, and the Fashion Institute had already begun to work on sample school uniforms, the announcement said. "However, the fact that it is usual, as the result of old traditions, to wear special school uniforms in such countries as the Soviet Union and Britain is no reason for us to take a similar step" the Ministry of Education announced.

BOOK CORNER

THE FACTS ABOUT THE FRONTIERS

"Germany's Eastern Neighbours" by Elizabeth Wiskemann. Oxford University Press. London: Cumberlege. 30 shillings.

In any serious consideration of the future of Germany, the question of German frontiers must obviously take a prominent place. Germany has few clearly defined national frontiers, and large parts of her borderline have moved backwards and forwards across the map of Europe with dazzling rapidity in the last ninety years and with particular speed in the past forty years. Naturally this has left many people in a haze about the whole situation.

That is why the Royal Institute of International Affairs in London must be highly commended for commissioning Miss Elizabeth Wiskemann, a very able writer on contemporary history, to compile this valuable new book.

The problems covered by the book are best summed up in the sub-title "Problems Relating to the Oder-Neisse Line and the Czech Frontier Regions".

Miss Wiskemann, using a vast mass of material from official and unofficial British, French, West German, Czechoslovak, Polish and other sources, has brought together in the space of 300 pages, in a very readable form, most of what the ordinary student of contemporary affairs needs to know about the problems of the eastern borders of Germany.

In her introduction she states: "I have allowed myself to presume that what the British public will want to know is what has really happened in and in connexion with the German-Slav borderlands until now, in order to form an opinion as to the best solution of their problems in the future".

She has devoted a major part of her book to the question of the Oder-Neisse line, the frontier between Poland and Germany, provisionally fixed by the great powers at the Potsdam Conference, and finally defined in a state treaty between Poland and the German Democratic Republic in 1950. And this is undoubtedly the core of the problem, since the West German Government has repeatedly officially stated that it will never relinquish its claims to large tracts of country which have in the course of the past eleven years been firmly integrated in Poland. The vast majority of the German inhabitants of the area east of the Oder-Neisse left this area, or were expelled, ten, eleven or twelve years ago, and Miss Wiskemann shows conclusively that many millions of Poles now live and work there.

She devotes rather less attention to the frontier areas of Czechoslovakia, from which several million German speaking people were expelled after the war.

Dealing with the question of the Germans from these eastern areas in Poland and Czechoslovakia, Miss Wiskemann has this to say:

"They seem on the whole to have been singularly forgetful of what their representatives, as the Nazis after all were, had done to people of Slavonic race, and singularly unaware of the element of rough justice in the treatment they now often received. Ever since 1945 Germans have not ceased to marvel at the hatred their actions had engendered, nor to protest that 'deutsche Menschen' should have been treated just like the foreign slave-labour upon which Nazi Germany depended during the war."

Miss Wiskemann has been very cautious in drawing any conclusions from the facts she sets forth. However, on balance, she concludes that the Oder-Neisse frontier should be retained, and adds: "If one considers the recent record of the German minorities in eastern Europe, it is difficult to wish them back there".

It perhaps makes Miss Wiskemann's book even more valuable in the western world that she is outspokenly, and sometimes gratuitously, anti-Communist and anti-Soviet. This should remove any doubt in the minds of readers that she is perhaps arguing the merits of the Oder-Neisse frontier because of her political commitments. But I think it is to be regretted that Miss Wiskemann has almost totally ignored the German Democratic Republic, and the contributions which it has made both to settling the problem of the German expellees from Eastern Europe — nearly four million of them were settled and integrated, with very little friction, in East Germany — and to reaching friendly relations with the neighbouring states in eastern Europe.

Her partial blindness on this subject has led her so far that as far as could be ascertained she has not consulted one single East German book or newspaper in her otherwise very thorough research.

But this is a relatively minor omission in what I am convinced is likely to be the definitive English work on the subject for some time to come. It is required reading for every student of the contemporary world who is sincerely interested in a solution of the German problem.

John Peet

VISITORS' BOOK

Sportsmen and women from Prague, Helsinki, Cairo and Sofia, as well as over 30,000 young West Germans, were amongst those who took part in the German Gymnastics and Sports Festival in Leipzig during the first weekend in August.

An Egyptian delegation, headed by Major Hassanein, Governor of El Tahrir province, toured the German Democratic Republic early in August. Talks on extension of trade between Egypt and East Germany were also held.

Teachers from all over the world, including Greece, Britain, Portugal, Syria and the Soviet Union, met for ten days early in August at an international teachers' camp in Dresden — the first of its kind to be held in East Germany. Main subject of discussion was the task of the schools on the threshold of the atomic age.

Dutch, British and Swedish trade unionists now holidaying in Oberhof in the Thuringian mountains are guests of the Free German Trade Union Federation.

German Hospital in Hanoi

A 370-bed hospital, built and equipped as a gift of the East German people to the people of Vietnam, opened its doors in Hanoi this month.

The hospital has fifteen departments, including orthopaedics, urology, gynaecology, maternity, dental and X-ray departments, and a big dispensary. There are eight operating tables in the operating wing and there is a lecture hall to seat 200, since this hospital will be used mainly as a surgical training centre.

East Germany has also presented Vietnam with a fully equipped 8-class school and a creche.

BERLIN NOTEBOOK

By John Peet

In March this year I asked on this page when London was going to get a chance to see a really good production of some of the plays of Bertolt Brecht, outstanding German playwright and poet who is regarded by many critics on both sides of the rusty iron curtain as one of the finest living European writers.

My question has been answered sooner than I dared to hope. On August 27th Bertolt Brecht, with his famous theatre group "Berliner Ensemble" from East Berlin, is opening a short season in the Palace Theatre, London.

The theatre group is taking to London "Mother Courage" and the "Caucasian Chalk Circle" both written by Brecht, and "Drums and Trumpets", an adaptation in the Brecht style of the British classic "The Recruiting Officer" by George Farquar.

The plays will be performed in German, of course, but do not let that stop you. I would sincerely urge all readers in the London area to try and go to see at least one of the productions: all three would be better.

And we shall be very interested to see any comments readers care to make on the plays and their production. I am enthusiastic: I hope you will be too.

Honorary Awards

In 1952, soon after German Report was launched, I amused myself by conferring purely honorary awards in the columns of this notebook to western newspaper men who made particular asses of themselves in their reports on East German affairs. There was, for instance, the "Order of Nelson", awarded for not seeing things which were very clearly there for all to see, and the "Award of the Pink Elephant" for seeing things which were not there.

My practice of conferring such honours gradually fell into desuetude, partly because the joke began to wear thin, and partly because there was a perceptible improvement in the standard of reporting on East German affairs. I do not mean to say that everything that the mass circulation press wrote about the German Democratic Republic suddenly became truthful and objective; far from it. But there has been a decrease in the number and scope of the cruder sort of lie. And for this we should all be thankful.

However, I think it might be a good idea to institute an entirely new honour for an unnamed sub-editor of the London "Evening Standard", who on July 27th wrote the headline to an article by Jack Jones, British Labour M. P. who recently visited the German Democratic Republic.

But before dealing with the headline, let us have a look at Jack Jones' article. It deals with Stalinstadt, a completely new steel town of 20,000 people on the river Oder. Mr. Jones, together with a number of other M. P. s, recently visited the town and the steel combine, and was very much impressed by much that he saw.

Praise

In his article he praised the "beautifully designed flats", the "canteens serving wholesome food in extremely pleasant conditions" and the "amazing technical equipment of the plant". Since Mr. Jones is himself a steel worker, he presumably knows what he is talking about.

He found things to criticise too: wages are low by British standards, he feels. But his main negative impression was seeing East German prisoners, guarded by warders armed with tommy guns, working in various departments of the steel combine. Some are political prisoners and some are ordinary criminals, he states, and "The East German Government prefers to put them to useful work rather than let them sit idle in jails".

Best Way?

I expect most readers would agree that it is better both for the convicts and for society as a whole that they should be employed on useful construction work rather than on soul-destroying tasks like sewing mail-bags; but I must say I share some of Mr. Jones' reservations as to whether the best method is to employ the convicts, under armed guard, alongside ordinary workers in one factory department.

But that is not the point at issue here. Mr. Jones mentions the convicts, and he mentions the armed warders who guard them; he does not mention tommy-guns in any other connection in the whole course of the article.

Another thing he does not mention in any form is a strike. He does not refer, directly or indirectly to strikes, the possibility of strikes, or the non-existence of strikes because of tommy-guns.

Why am I stressing this point? For the simple reason that the unnamed sub-editor of the "Evening Standard" saw fit to compose this headline for the article: "There are no Strikes in Stalinstadt ... Not with Tommy-Guns Guarding the Factory Doors".

And for this cynical innuendo in the headline, which has absolutely no basis at all in the article, I should like to award the unnamed sub-editor our special "Red Herring Medal".

I must say if I were Jack Jones, I would make quite sure what sort of headline was going to be written before contributing any more articles to the "Evening Standard".

Just incidentally, the man who draws the maps for the "Evening Standard" seems to quality for a "Mention in Dispatches for Outstanding Myopia". In the little sketch map which he drew to accompany Jack Jones' article he showed East Germany extending far to the east of its actual frontier, and including about one third of Poland. In fact he shows the frontier as it was seventeen years ago, in 1939: his atlas seems to be slow.

Retarded

While we are on the subject, perhaps I should mention an outstanding example of retarded development in the London "News Chronicle" on August 8th. On that date the "News Chronicle" solemnly reported that West Germany would be represented at the Suez Conference by "Foreign Secretary von Neurath".

The files in the "News Chronicle" office seem to be 18 years out of date. Von Neurath ceased to be German Foreign Minister in February 1938, and in 1946 he was sentenced to 15 years imprisonment as a major war criminal.

But perhaps the mistake is pardonable. With things going as they are in West Germany, I really should not be very much surprised if this old nazi were once again appointed Foreign Minister.

Dynamite

A choir composed of 120 employees of a dynamite factory in Cologne serenaded West German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer at his mountain holiday resort of Buehlerhoehe on August 5th. At his special request they sang him the song "When the sun goes down".

Edited and published fortnightly by John Peet Democratic German Report, Friedrichstrasse 167/III Berlin W 8, Telephone 22 29 68. Printed in Germany by (36). Veröffentlicht unter Lizenz-Nr. 694 beim Presseamt des Ministerpräsidenten der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik